

REMARKS

The present office action includes an objection to the status identifiers used in presenting claim amendments as part of the response to a prior office action. The status identifiers have been corrected by the listing of claims submitted herewith and comply with the PTO's Revised Amendment Practice. Specifically, the status identifiers for claims 1, 10, and 17 have been amended from "(previously and currently amended)" in the Response to Office Action dated 12/29/03 to "(currently amended)". The status identifiers for claims 4, 5, 8, 9, and 14 have been amended from "(previously amended)" in the Response to Office Action dated December 29, 2003 to "(previously presented)". The status identifier for claims 20-26 has been amended from "(previously cancelled)" in the Response to Office Action dated December 29, 2003 to "(cancelled)". No other amendments were made to the claims (or the status identifiers).

Acknowledgment is made herein for the Examiner's indication of allowance of the claims as amended. It is agreed that the claims are not suggested or disclosed by the references specifically cited in the office action of December 29, 2003, by the Wilkie patent cited of interest in the present action, or by any of the other references made of record (including Edlein, Curatolo, etc.) as discussed in and referenced by the prior information disclosure statements.

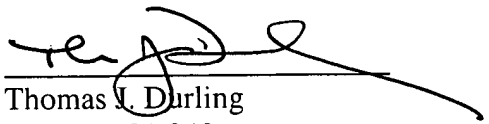
Further, the Examiner is requested to review the references cited on the accompanying Supplemental IDS, and to make these references of record.

In view of the foregoing, an early Notice of Allowance of all claims is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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